

CLAIMS

[c1] 1. A method in a computer system for providing information related to a supplier of engineering services, the method comprising:

receiving a request for a supplier search display description, the supplier search display description configured to receive selected search criteria including a skill;

providing the supplier search display description;

receiving the selected search criteria;

based on the received selected search criteria, retrieving information related to the supplier;

generating a supplier information display description containing at least a portion of the retrieved information related to the supplier; and

providing the generated supplier information display description.

[c2] 2. The method of claim 1 wherein:

[0067] the supplier search display description is a main search web page containing one or more of a skill search tool configured to receive a selected skill or a region search tool configured to receive a selected region; and wherein

[0068] the received supplier criteria comprises one or more of the selected skill or the selected region.

[c3] 3. The method of claim 1 wherein:

[0069] the supplier search display description is a main search web page containing a global rollover map search tool configured to receive a pointing device and contemporaneously display a supplier list, the supplier list configured to receive a selected supplier; and wherein

[0070] the received supplier criteria comprises the selected supplier.

[c4] 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a project the supplier worked on and the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[c5] 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a skill the supplier has demonstrated and the name of systems the supplier has worked on.

[c6] 6. The method of claim 1 wherein the supplier information display description is a first supplier information display description, the method further comprising:

receiving a request for a second supplier information display description, the second supplier information display description comprising supplier qualification information; and

providing the second supplier information display description.

[c7] 7. The method of claim 1 wherein the supplier information display description is a first supplier information display description, the method further comprising:

receiving a request for a second supplier information display description, the second supplier information display description comprising a supplier score indicative of the supplier's qualification in a selected skill; and

providing the second supplier information display description.

[c8] 8. The method of claim 1 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier of engineering services includes the name of the supplier of engineering services.

[c9] 9. The method of claim 1 wherein the supplier of engineering services supplies manufacturing services.

[c10] 10. The method of claim 1 wherein the supplier of engineering services supplies one or more of design, drafting or analytical services.

[c11] 11. A method in a computer system for providing supplier information, the method comprising:

providing a display description for entering a supplier search query;

receiving the entered supplier search query;

based on the received supplier search query, retrieving supplier information; and

providing the retrieved supplier information, the retrieved supplier information including supplier performance information.

[c12] 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the provided display description is a web page containing one or more supplier search tools, the one or more supplier search tools being configured to receive one or more skills and/or one or more regions.

[c13] 13. The method of claim 11 wherein the received supplier search query is one or more of a skill or a region.

[c14] 14. The method of claim 11 wherein the retrieved supplier information is one or more names of suppliers of engineering services.

[c15] 15. The method of claim 11 wherein:

[0071] the provided display description is a web page containing one or more supplier search tools, the one or more supplier search tools being configured to receive one or more skills and/or one or more regions;

[0072] the received supplier search query is one or more skills and/or one or more regions; and

[0073] the retrieved supplier information is one or more names of suppliers who possess the one or more skills or who reside in the one or more regions.

[C16] 16. The method of claim 11 wherein the retrieved supplier information includes the name of a project the supplier has worked on and the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[C17] 17. The method of claim 11 wherein the retrieved supplier information includes the name of a skill the supplier has demonstrated and the name of a part the supplier has worked on.

[C18] 18. The method of claim 11 wherein the retrieved supplier information includes a name of an engineering project the supplier has worked on, a name of an analytical skill the supplier possesses, a name of a part the supplier has worked on, and a name of a contact individual who has worked with the supplier.

[C19] 19. The method of claim 11 wherein the retrieved supplier information includes a supplier list, and wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a selected supplier;

based on the received selected supplier; retrieving additional information including a name of an engineering project the selected supplier has worked on, a name of an analytical skill the selected supplier possesses, and a name of an individual who has worked with the selected supplier; and

providing the retrieved additional information.

[c20] 20. The method of claim 11 wherein the supplier performance information includes the name of a project the supplier worked on and a rating.

[c21] 21. The method of claim 11 wherein the supplier performance information includes a skill and a rating corresponding to the skill.

[c22] 22. A method for providing information related to a supplier, the method comprising:

receiving a request for a supplier search tool;

providing the supplier search tool, the supplier search tool configured to receive one or more selected skills and/or one or more selected regions;

receiving the one or more selected skills and/or the one or more selected regions;

based on the received one or more selected skills and/or the one or more selected regions, retrieving information related to the supplier; and

providing the retrieved information.

[c23] 23. The method of claim 22 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a project the supplier worked on and the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[c24] 24. The method of claim 22 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a skill the supplier has demonstrated and the name of systems the supplier has worked on.

[c25] 25. The method of claim 22 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes a name of the supplier.

[c26] 26. A computer-readable medium containing a display description for searching for a supplier, the display description comprising:

a skill search tool configured to receive one or more selected skills;
and

a region search tool configured to receive one or more selected regions.

[c27] 27. The computer-readable medium of claim 26 further comprising:

a rollover map search tool configured to receive a pointing device and automatically display a supplier list.

[c28] 28. A computer-readable medium containing a display description for presenting supplier information, the display description comprising:

supplier identification information;

supplier contact information;

supplier skill information;

a project history icon, wherein selecting the project history icon causes a project history display description to automatically be displayed; and

a qualifications icon, wherein selecting the qualifications icon causes a qualifications display description to automatically be displayed.

[c29] 29. The computer-readable medium of claim 28 wherein the project history display description comprises one or more of:

a project name, the project name being the name of a project the supplier worked on;

a skill name, the skill name being the name of a skill the supplier has demonstrated;

a part name, the part name being the name of a part the supplier worked on; and

a contact name, the contact name being the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[c30] 30. The computer-readable medium of claim 28 wherein the qualifications display description comprises one or more of:

a skill name, the skill name being the name of a skill the supplier has demonstrated; and

a score, the score being a measure of the supplier's proficiency in the skill.

[c31] 31. A computer system for providing information related to a supplier, the computer system comprising:

means for receiving a request for a supplier search display description, the supplier search display description configured to receive selected search criteria;

means for providing the supplier search display description;

means for receiving the selected search criteria;

means for retrieving information related to the supplier based on the received selected search criteria;

means for generating a supplier information display description containing at least a portion of the retrieved information related to the supplier; and

means for providing the generated supplier information display description.

[c32] 32. The computer system of claim 31 wherein:

[0074] the supplier search display description is a main search web page containing one or more of a skill search tool configured to receive a selected skill or a region search tool configured to receive a selected region; and wherein

[0075] the received supplier criteria comprises one or more of the selected skill or the selected region.

[c33] 33. The computer system of claim 31 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a project the supplier worked on and the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[c34] 34. The computer system of claim 31 wherein the supplier information display description is a first supplier information display description, the computer system further comprising:

means for receiving a request for a second supplier information display description, the second supplier information display description comprising supplier qualification information; and

means for providing the requested second supplier information display description.

[c35] 35. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to provide information related to a supplier of engineering services, the information being provided by a method comprising:

receiving a request for a supplier search display description, the supplier search display description configured to receive selected search criteria;

providing the supplier search display description;

receiving the selected search criteria;

based on the received selected search criteria, retrieving information related to the supplier;

generating a supplier information display description containing at least a portion of the retrieved information related to the supplier; and

providing the generated supplier information display description.

[c36] 36. The computer-readable medium of claim 35 wherein:

[0076] the supplier search display description is a main search web page containing one or more of a skill search tool configured to receive a selected skill or a region search tool configured to receive a selected region; and wherein

[0077] the received supplier criteria comprises one or more of the selected skill or the selected region.

[c37] 37. The computer-readable medium of claim 35 wherein:

[0078] the supplier search display description is a main search web page containing a global rollover map search tool configured to receive a pointing device and contemporaneously display a supplier list, the supplier list configured to receive a selected supplier; and wherein

[0079] the received supplier criteria comprises the selected supplier.

[c38] 38. The computer-readable medium of claim 35 wherein the retrieved information related to the supplier includes the name of a project the supplier worked on and the name of an individual who has worked with the supplier.

[c39] 39. The computer-readable medium of claim 35 wherein the supplier information display description is a first supplier information display description, the method further comprising:

receiving a request for a second supplier information display description, the second supplier information display description comprising a supplier score indicative of the supplier's qualification in a selected skill; and

[0080] providing the second supplier information display description.

[c40] 40. A computer memory containing a supplier database for use by a supplier search system, the supplier database comprising:

a supplier table comprising a plurality of entries, each entry comprising a supplier identifier that identifies a particular supplier;

a skill/supplier table comprising a plurality of entries, each entry comprising a skill identifier that identifies a particular skill; and

a country table comprising a plurality of entries, each entry comprising a country identifier that identifies a particular country.

[c41] 41. The computer memory of claim 40 wherein each entry in the supplier table further comprises:

a country identifier, the country identifier identifying a country in which the identified supplier is located; and

a contact identifier, the contact identifier identifying a person who can be contacted for information regarding the identified supplier.

- [C42] 42. The computer memory of claim 40 wherein each entry in the skill/supplier table further comprises:

a supplier identifier, the supplier identifier identifying a supplier having the identified skill.

- [C43] 43. The computer memory of claim 40 further comprising:

a project table, the project table comprising a plurality of entries, each entry comprising a project identifier that identifies a particular project and a supplier identifier that identifies a particular supplier who worked on the identified project.

- [C44] 44. The computer memory of claim 43 wherein each entry in the project table further comprises:

a skill identifier, the skill identifier identifying a particular skill used by the identified supplier when working on the identified project; and

a contact identifier, the contact identifier identifying a person who can be contacted for information regarding the identified supplier's performance on the identified project.

- [C45] 45. A computer-readable medium containing a display description for receiving supplier data, the display description comprising:

a supplier name field for receiving the name of a selected supplier;

a country name field for receiving the name of a selected country in which the supplier is located; and

a supplier contact field for receiving selected information useful for contacting the selected supplier.

[C46] 46. The computer-readable medium of claim 45 wherein the display description further comprises;

one or more project fields for receiving the names of one or more selected projects the selected supplier has worked on;

one or more contact fields for receiving the names of one or more selected individuals who can be contacted for additional information related to the one or more selected projects; and

one or more skills fields for receiving the names of one or more skills associated with the one or more selected projects.

[C47] 47. A method in a computer system for presenting suppliers, the method comprising:

displaying a map having one or more regions;

positioning a pointer over a selected region; and

in response to detecting the positioned pointer over the selected region, displaying one or more suppliers.

[C48] 48. The method of claim 47 wherein the displayed one or more suppliers are suppliers located within the selected region.

[C49] 49. The method of claim 47 further comprising:

[C50] selecting a skill, wherein the displayed one or more suppliers are suppliers located within the selected region having the selected skill.